DOH Communications Office Emergency Plan

Important Notice

This booklet contains emergency operations procedures and should be considered

confidential. Forward any requests for release or duplication of this information to

the Washington State Department of Health Communications Office.

Last revision: July 2009

DOH Communications Office Emergency Strategy

I. Overview

a) Communication Plan Goals

- Build and maintain public confidence in the public health system and its ability to respond to—and effectively manage—an emergency.
- Provide accurate, rapid and complete information to calm fears and maintain a sense of order.
- Rapidly provide the public, health care providers, policy-makers and the media access to accurate, consistent, and comprehensive information about the emergency and event-specific details.
- Address—as quickly as possible—rumors and inaccuracies.
- Provide accurate, consistent and highly accessible information and materials through the coordination of communication efforts with other federal, state and local partners.
- Provide accurate, consistent and highly accessible information and materials to internal staff to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities.
- Consider diverse audience needs and provide accessible information.

b) Communication Plan Elements

Communication plans and activities will include:

- Proactive education – Prepare staff, system partners, media, general public and other key audiences with information on the emergency to minimize rumors and inaccuracies.
- Minimize risk through immediate and coordinated response – Planning efforts include clear communication and message approval channels to ensure rapid and coordinated information flow. This will be essential in both pre-event and event situations. Assumptions:
    - o The event will generate immediate, intense and sustained public and stakeholder interest and demand for information.
    - o There will be an ongoing need for coordinated updates and information resources with key partners.
- Event response – Systems for rapid information dissemination (health messages and logistical information) to key partners, media and general public.
- Special populations – Develop messages and communication channels for a range of audiences including: parents/children, elderly, non-English speaking groups, special risk groups, organizations serving special needs communities (e.g. homeless services).
- Key partner outreach – To key partners including public health system, tribal and local governments, emergency service providers and related agencies and organizations.
- Frequently Asked Questions – Use established systems and methods for rapidly identifying, tracking and responding to state, local public health, healthcare provider, media, general public and other target audience concerns and questions.
- Coordinated information – Provide one voice for DOH—and, when possible, the public health system—by coordinating message development/dissemination with internal experts.
- Provide ongoing resources for general public – Web site, call center and/or recorded information line, media education events, fact sheets, outreach to special needs communities, etc.

- Provide ongoing communication resources for system partners – Ensure plan works in concert with ongoing emergency communication planning and resource development, including Web-based resources, training and staff support.

c) Risk Communication Principles

Actions in this plan are guided by the following principles:

- Adopt a policy of full disclosure about what is and is not known.
- Provide detailed accounting of what is being done to address and counter the threat.
- Recommend specific steps people can or should take to protect themselves.
- Avoid speculation.
- Provide information for the general public in non-technical language, without jargon or acronyms.
- Avoid issuance of statements or information that conflicts with information provided by other related government agencies.
- Deliver information in a non-patronizing manner.

Emergency Communication Toolkit: **http://www.doh.wa.gov/phepr/toolkit/**

Toolkit containing templates, checklists and fact sheets created to help during a disease outbreak, natural disaster or other public health emergency. The resources may be used by DOH or local health partners in developing messages during all phases of emergency response.

Note: DOH Employee Emergency Hotline: (to check building/report to work status) 360-586-3337 or 1-877-357-4636

DOH Communications Office Emergency Operations

Communications Office/Emergency Plan Logistics:

- The Communications Office Emergency Strategy is activated by positions 1, 2, or 3 (or designee) during a public health emergency.

- The emergency communications plan will be coordinated from the DOH Communications Office in Tumwater.

- Emergency hotline system is in place with several Communication Office lines streaming to one number (360-236-4040) and diverting to specified phones when activated.

- The General Public Emergency Call Center is located in TC-1, Tumwater. If activated, Communications Office staff will work with the DOH EOC to call in volunteers from the roster. The hotline number is: 1-888-703-4364.

- The State Joint Information Center is coordinated by the Emergency Management Division of the Washington State Department of Military at Camp Murray. DOH staff will be deployed there when the JIC is activated in an emergency involving public health.

- If necessary, DOH emergency communications staff—on limited priority basis—can be deployed to affected region (Local Health Jurisdiction [LHJ] or Joint Information Center).

- Positions 1-3 below coordinate with each other on issues management. Logistics are subject to change due to circumstances and available resources.

Emergency Communications Office Management Team:

Position 1 –   Serves with Secretary of Health as a member of the Assessment and Response Team (ART).

Assigned to: **Communications Director**
                 (alternate duties divided between Positions #2 and #3)

- **Primary duties:** *Coordinate communications strategy and media for Secretary of Health*
  - Media and issues planning and management as part of ART.
  - Priority media response.
  - Senior consultant on risk communication/media issues for public health system and emergency management partners.
  - Key messages for Secretary of Health and ART.
  - **Key contacts**—Governor's Communication Office; DOH Senior Management.

Position 2 –   Serves at State Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Assigned to: **Media Manager**
                 (Alternate 1: Senior Public Information Officer, Media Relations)

- **Primary duties:** *Department of Health Representative at State EOC*
  - Media and issues management and response as part of EOC.
  - Priority media response.
  - Coordinate media/key messages for key DOH staff (at EOC) including Health Officer, DOH Risk Manager, etc.
  - Ensure consistent public health messages in EOC products; participate in JIC as needed.

- Ensure DOH news releases and priority messages distributed throughout local emergency management agencies as appropriate (through State Emergency Management Division).
- Risk communication/media consultation State Health Officer, public health system and emergency management partners, as needed.
- **Key contacts**—State/local emergency response partners including State Emergency Management Division, State Patrol, Department of Transportation and other state/local agencies as applicable.

Position 3 –   Emergency Communications Office Manager.

Assigned to: **Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager**
                    (Alternate 1: Senior Emergency Communications Specialist)

- **Primary duties**: *Manage Emergency Communications Plan*

  - Media and issues management as part of Communications Office.

  - Activation of Communications Office emergency phone system.

  - Activation of General Public Emergency Call Center(s).

  - Manage information resources – Public Information Officers (PIO), Web team and emergency staff and volunteer rosters.

  - Send out e-mail to Executive Support Team, Senior Management Team and DOH EOC on how to reach Emergency Communications Office Manager (see template in E-Mail Samples section).

  - Media and public information coordination including call triage, news releases, information requests, division contacts and resources, broadcast fax plan, and listserv e-mail messages..

  - Review messages for SECURES and Health Alert Network (HAN).

  - Coordinate updates to staff, system partners (including Local Health Jurisdictions and hospitals) and general public, as needed.

  - Risk communication/media consultation to public health system and emergency management partners, as needed.

  - Coordinate special needs community outreach including translations.

  - Assign a PIO to act in liaison role with Planning Chief in the DOH EOC. This liaison will monitor WEB EOC and check in at DOH EOC briefings as appropriate.

  - If deployed, manage messaging regarding Strategic National Stockpile (including real time information about locations and information for the public).

  - Coordinate internal messaging (including intranet site for staff) and external public/partner outreach (including Web site).

  - **Key contacts**—
    o   General DOH staff
    o   Specific DOH response partners, as appropriate, including Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response staff, DOH EOC, Strategic National Stockpile Coordinators, Office of Communicable Disease Epidemiology, etc.
    o   Local and regional emergency preparedness staff (including Regional Emergency Communications Liaisons).
    o   Local Health Jurisdictions; Washington State Association of Local Public Health Officials (WSALPHO).
    o   System partners (including designated hospitals and regional medical centers).
    o   Tribal Governments, CDC Communication Office, National Public Health Information Coalition.
    o   State agencies such as Department of Information Services, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lottery, School for the Blind, EMD Business Liaison, etc.

Emergency Communications Office Operations: PIOs

PIO Position A – Response Coordinator

Assigned to: **PIOs and emergency roster designees as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: Serves at Communications Office. Assists Emergency Communications Office Manager with tracking and prioritizing key issues.

  - Pick up and triage "contact" forms from staff answering incoming calls on the emergency hotline.
  - Organize, prioritize and track all calls, inquiries and response efforts.
  - Answer inquiries from DOH and public health system staff regarding status of interviews, information distribution efforts, and potential issues.

PIO Position B – Strategic National Stockpile and Special Needs Communities Information Coordinator

Assigned to: **PIOs and emergency roster designees as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: Serves at Communications Office. Assists LHJs with related information issues; updates local logistical information for DOH Web and General Public Call Center.

  - Ensure LHJs have correct fact sheets, media release templates, talking points, translations, pictograms, low literacy materials and other needed resources materials to meet public information and target audience needs.
  - Answer LHJ questions regarding Medication Center signage, patient education materials and special needs community communication resources.
  - Track local SNS logistical issues to ensure up-to-date information is relayed to DOH Call Center, Communications Office and Web Team staff.
  - Track special needs community communication resource requests.
  - Special issues – pandemic influenza outreach.

PIO Position C – General Public Emergency Call Center Supervisor

Assigned to: **Senior Emergency Communications Specialist and other PIO(s) as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: *Call Center logistics*

  - Coordinate General Public Emergency Call Center and EZ Route system set-up.
  - Coordinate emergency volunteer roster call-in with DOH EOC.
  - Supervise Call Center operations.
  - Complete duties listed in ***General Public Emergency Call Center*** section.

PIO Position D – DOH EOC Communications Office Liaison

Assigned to: **Emergency Communications Specialist and other PIO(s) as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: *Liaison between Communications Office and DOH EOC*

  - Triage and track communications issues in DOH EOC.
  - Write, edit, review materials (such as EOC email messages).
  - Notify Communications Office management of emerging issues.

PIO Position E (multiple) – Serves at Communications Office.

Assigned to: **PIOs and emergency roster designees as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: *Public information support functions*

  - Create news releases, talking points, background information, fact sheets and other materials.
  - Respond to general media/DOH staff /partner information inquiries.
  - **Monitor and triage questions from prepare@doh.wa.gov email box.**

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Emergency Communications Office Operations: Web Team

Web Position A – Serves at Communications Office.

Assigned to: **Senior Web Designer; emergency communications specialist(s)**

- **Primary duties**: *Priority messages on internal/external Web*

  - Activate emergency Web messages.
  - Coordinate: employee communications (intranet); media, general public and public health system partner messages and alerts (external Web).
  - Manage ongoing updates, messages and site maintenance.
  - Communications Office liaison to DIRM and DIS; senior consultant(s) to DOH and emergency operations partners.
  - Activate emergency Web plan (AccessWA) in the event of DOH server failure.

Web Position B – Serves at Communications Office.

Assigned to: **PIOs as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: *Coordinate emergency postings between secure and nonsecure Web*
  - Communications Office liaison to WASecures team and public health system partners; coordinate with Web Management Team.
  - Review emergency messages on secure Web; ensure consistency.

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Emergency Communications Office: Admin. Support

Administrative Support – Serves at Communications Office.

Assigned to: **Administrative support staff and emergency roster designees as assigned**

- **Primary duties**: *Communications Office support*

  - Information distribution (including broadcast faxes to media, WSHA, etc.).
  - Assist Emergency Communications Office Manager and PIOs with activating Communications Office emergency phone system and General Public Emergency Call Center.
  - Assist with contacting roster volunteers and monitoring staffing levels.
  - Assist with materials preparation as needed.
  - Respond to general inquiries.
  - Other duties as assigned.

Media Response Plan Detail:

Major public health emergencies

This plan applies to the following situations:
- Public health emergency or bioterrorism attack resulting in cases of unusual illnesses like anthrax, smallpox or tularemia that may affect Washington state residents; chemical and radiation emergencies; a major disease outbreak; natural disasters with public health implications.

This plan goes into effect when:
- The Secretary of Health or designee notifies the Washington State Department of Health (DOH) Communications Office of a public health emergency and the Communications Director or designee activates the plan.

Initial Work

Within 30 minutes of notification the following actions must be taken:
- **Communications Director or designee enacts Communications Office Emergency Plan**:

  - The Communications Director will re-establish contact with (and possibly join) the Secretary of Health.
  - The Media Relations Manager will join the Health Officer and Risk Manager at the state Emergency Operations Center (Camp Murray).
  - The Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager will oversee the Communications Office operations.

- **All media calls will be routed to the Communications Office**. The Communications Office will notify all DOH staff via e-mail that these calls must be referred to the Communications Office. *(See template.)*

  - Staff will issue a statewide emergency media advisory via blast fax directing reporters to the Communications Office, providing contact names and numbers.
  - Emergency media advisory and/or emergency Web message will immediately be posted on the DOH Web home page.
  - A PIO will be designated Response Coordinator and will track calls into the Communications Office.

  This process ensures that reporters receive consistent messages and that valuable professional staff time is spent addressing the potential public health problem (rather than responding to the media). *(Communications staff will determine the appropriate response and serve as a liaison between reporters and DOH newsmakers.)*

The Communications Office will contact the following:

Communications staff	Contact (for phone list, see attachment)
1. Communications Director	• Governor's Press Secretary • Centers for Disease Control's Office of Communication
2. Media Relations Manager	• Emergency Management Division Communications Office • Other affected state agency communication offices as needed
3. Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager	• Affected local health jurisdiction communications manager(s) • Department of Information Services Communications Office • National Public Health Information Coalition • Key Partners (emergency communication liaisons, tribes, community organizations, cross-border communication network, as appropriate.

(The listed contacts must receive copies of any news releases or advisories produced during the course of the public health threat.)

- **Message development**.
  - Public/Media messages. The Communications Office will coordinate and approve all external messages and will recommend appropriate spokespeople for the department.
  - Internal agency messages. The Communications Office will coordinate and approve all internal messages and will recommend appropriate spokespeople for the department.
  - The Communications Office will advise partner agencies in their development of messages.

Continuing efforts

- **Working with the media**. The Communications Office will work with the Secretary of Health or designee (depending on volume and nature of the calls) on executing the media strategy.
- All media calls will be routed through the Communications Office for the duration of emergency status.
  - As outlined in the Communications Office Emergency Plan, the PIO designated Response Coordinator will track phone calls.
- **Keeping partners informed**.
  The Communications Office will provide regular status updates to:
  - Governor's Press Secretary (Position 1)
  - Emergency Management Division communications office (Position 2)
  - Other affected state agencies communications offices (Position 2)
  - Affected local health jurisdictions communications manager(s) (Position 3)
  - DOH EOC (Position 3)

- **Holding a news conference**.
  If the emergency situation warrants it, a news conference will be called (most likely held at the state EOC at Camp Murray or public health labs in Shoreline). The Secretary of Health or designee will lead the news conference and work with the Communications Office to determine who else will be involved.

Regular briefings

- The Communications Office will work with the Secretary of Health to decide what level of regular briefing will occur.
- If there are few new details, then briefings will occur through news releases at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. whenever possible.

- When appropriate, all news releases will quote the Secretary of Health or designee as spokesperson.
- The Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager will coordinate posting regular updates on the DOH Web site.

News conferences

- News conferences will be called only if there are very newsworthy details.
- The Secretary of Health or designee will lead all news conferences.
- Notification of news conferences will occur in the following way:
  - **Call** all major media outlets (people who have ability to cover the news conference in Olympia as well as sending it out statewide) and tell them what's happening. Use Washington State Association of Broadcasters to disseminate message (www.wsab.org).
  - **E-Mail** to DOH employees, media distribution lists, partner list serves (i.e., WSALPHO) and other state agencies

News releases

- News releases are to be drafted and reviewed following standard procedure but at an expedited pace; during major emergencies all news releases must be reviewed and approved by the Secretary of Health and the Communications Director or their designees.
- News releases will be sent to all state media including Associated Press (AP) via blast fax. AP will receive the first release, and the Communications Office will call to confirm that it was received.
- News releases will be sent to all local media in the affected area following the initial release to the AP. Staff will call local media to ensure that they received the release.

Standing down

This plan remains in effect until the Communications Director, in consultation with the Secretary of Health, determines it is time to stand down. If the emergency becomes a criminal investigation, the DOH will work with law enforcement on the appropriate process for releasing information.

Recovery

The Communications Office Management Team will coordinate recovery message, products and materials.

Washington State Department of **Health** **Media Advisory**

For immediate release: (date), 2009

(MA-08-xxx)

Contact: Communications Office   360-236-4040 (media only)

Washington state public health emergency

Media Hotline Activated

(Location of event) – On (date) at (time) (event). This event has left Washington in a state of public health emergency, and the Washington State Department of Health's Communications Office has staff on duty to answer media calls.

All media questions regarding the current health threat should be directed to our media emergency hotline. **Please do not forward this number to the general public**. (Giving this number to the public will make it harder for media to contact the Communications office.) The media hotline is 360-236-4040. Ongoing updates for media and the general public can be found on our Web site at www.doh.wa.gov.

To assess public health needs and provide information in a timely and accurate manner, the Department of Health is notifying and coordinating with local, state and federal health officials, including (specific agency related to crisis).

Note to editors and reporters: (Special instructions or information, if needed; driving directions, background, etc.).

Washington State Department of Health — News Release

Contact: *Communications Office*   *360-236-4040 (for media only)*
                                          1-888-703-4364 (for public use)

Washington state public health emergency
General Public Emergency Call Center Activated

(Location of event) – On (date) at (time) (event). This event has left Washington in a state of public health emergency. A toll-free hotline has been activated to answer calls from the general public.

The public hotline is 1-888-703-4364 (TTY users dial 711). We have staff on duty to answer calls.

All media questions regarding the current health threat should be directed to our Communications Office emergency media hotline. **Please do not forward media hotline number to the general public**. (Giving this number to the public will make it harder for media to contact the Communications office.) The media hotline is 360-236-4040.

Ongoing updates for media and the general public can be found on the DOH Web site at www.doh.wa.gov.

To assess public health needs and provide information in a timely and accurate manner, the Department of Health is notifying and coordinating with local, state and federal health officials, including (specific agency related to crisis).

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Visit the Washington Department of Health Web site at http://www.doh.wa.gov for *a healthy dose of information*.

Contacts

Event (earthquake, disease outbreak, etc.) _____

Your name	
Date	___/___/___
Time	___:___ Î a.m. Î p.m.
Caller's name	
Contact information	Phone: ( ) _____-_____
	If necessary: Pager: ( ) _____-_____ *Cellular:* *( ) _____-_____* Fax: ( ) _____-_____ E-mail: _____

Check type of organization	*Organization*	*Name*	*City*
	Î Newspaper Î Television Î Radio Î DOH staff (list dept.) Î Local health agency Î Other agency Î Public Î Other	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Summary of caller's question(s)	

	Media	*All others*
Response deadline	Date: ___/___/___ Time: ___:___ Î a.m. Î p.m.	Date: ___/___/___ Time: ___:___ Î a.m. Î p.m.
Action taken (interview, referral, returned call, etc.)		
Additional follow-up necessary?	Î Yes Î No If yes, what? _____ _____	Î Yes Î No If yes, what? _____ _____

Emergency Communications Contacts Phone List
(July 2009)

NAME	OFFICE	CELL	PAGER	HOME
Laura Blaske	360-236-4070	360-507-3648 206-941-8074	360-956-8307	360-877-5662
Larry Champine	360-236-4470	360-480-0327		360-943-2361
Tim Church	360-236-4077	360-280-2517	360-534-0068	253-566-1021
Bob Clark	360-236-4467			360-249-4934
Allison Cook	360-236-4022	360-584-2204	360-240-3377	360-357-4794
Gordon MacCracken	360-236-4072	360-485-8102	360-330-1125	360-736-2998
Cindy Marjamaa	360-236-4059			360-491-1038
Donn Moyer	360-236-4076	360-280-0487	360-786-2537	253-848-4933
Sharon Moysiuk	360-236-4074	360-701-4847		360-923-0018
Greg Nordlund	360-236-4427	360-818-4410	360-971-0964	360-818-4410

Emergency Communications Contacts Phone List
(July 2009)

Department	Name and phone number(s)
Governor's Communications Office	**Pearse Edwards, Director** Office..............(360) 902-0386 Cellular ....(360) 239-1954 **Laura Lockard, Press Secretary** **Karina Shagren, Press Secretary** Office..............(360) 902-4136
Emergency Management Division Public Affairs Office	**24-hour State Duty Officer** 1-800-258-5990 **Rob Harper, Director** Office..............(253) 512-7005 Pager..............(253) 591-0345 EOC* ....(253) 912-4950 (*when activated) **Mark Clemens** Office..............(253) 512-7006 Cellular ....(253) 405-9174 Pager..............(253) 291-2324
State Patrol Office of Government and Media Relations	**Capt. Jeff DeVere** Office..............(360) 596-4010 Cellular ....(360) 239-2216
Department of Transportation Communications Office	**Lloyd Brown, Director** Olympia Office (360) 705-7076 Cellular ....(360) 789-9232 **Jamie Holter, N.W. Region/King County** Office…………(206) 440-4698 Cellular……….(206) 719-7535 Pager………....(206) 437-6314 **Al Gilson, Eastern Region (Spokane)** Office..............(509) 324-6015 Cellular ....(509) 990-1504

Local health jurisdiction (LHJ) communications directors (For LHJs not listed here, refer to the "little red" Emergency Phone List.)	***Public Health - Seattle & King County*** James Apa Office.............(206) 205-5442 Cellular ....(206) 423-2540 Pager.............(206) 583-9785 Matias Valenzuela Office.............(206) 205-3331 Cellular ....(206) 423-2541 Pager.............(206) 540-4887 ***Thurston County*** John Tennis Office.............(360) 709-3073 Cellular ....(360) 239-5350 Home.............(360) 357-4397 ***Snohomish County Health District*** Suzanne Pate Office.............(425) 339-8704 Home.............(360) 653-3101 ***Clark County Health District*** Don Strick Office...(360) 397-6012 ext# 8 Cellular……….(360) 518-1731 Home.............(503) 203-8677 ***Spokane Regional Health District*** Julie Graham Office.............(509) 324-1539 Cellular ....(509) 979-5574 ***Tacoma-Pierce County Health District*** Joby Winans Office.............(253) 798-2853 Pager ....(253) 396-3936 Cellular ....(253) 405-6822 Home.............(360) 456-3842
Department of Information Services Communications Office	**Joanne Todd**, Communications Director Office.............(360) 902-3553 Cell ....(360) 280-1583

Washington State Lottery	**Jacque Coe,** Communications Director
	     Office..............(360) 664-4723
	     Cell ....(360) 790-5430

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Office of Communication	**Glen Nowak**, Media Relations Director
	     Office..............(404) 639-3286
	     Cellular ....(404) 376-6102
	
	Emergency After Hours On-Call
	     Mon-Sun ....(404) 639-2888
	
	Von Roebuck, Office of Terrorism Preparedness and Emergency Response
	     Office ....(404) 639-7284
	     Cellular ....(404) 202-1030
	
	Emergency Operations (770) 488-7100
	24-hour notification

National Public Health Information Coalition	**Laura Espino**, Communications Director Office..............(770) 509-5555

Emergency Communication Liaison Network:

REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Western Regions: 2, 3, 5, 6
Host LHJ: Seattle-King County
Liaison: **Meredith Li-Vollmer**
              (206) 263-8704   meredith.li-vollmer@kingcounty.gov

Eastern Region: 9
Host LHJ: Spokane County
Liaison: **Julie Graham**
              (509) 324-1689   jgraham@spokanecounty.org

South/Central Region: 4
Host LHJ: Clark County
Liaison: **Don Strick**
              (360) 397-6012   don.strick@clark.wa.gov

South/Central Region: 8
Host LHJ: Benton-Franklin County
Liaison: **Angela Seydel**
              (509) 586-0672, ext. 2   angelas@bfhd.wa.gov

North Region: 1
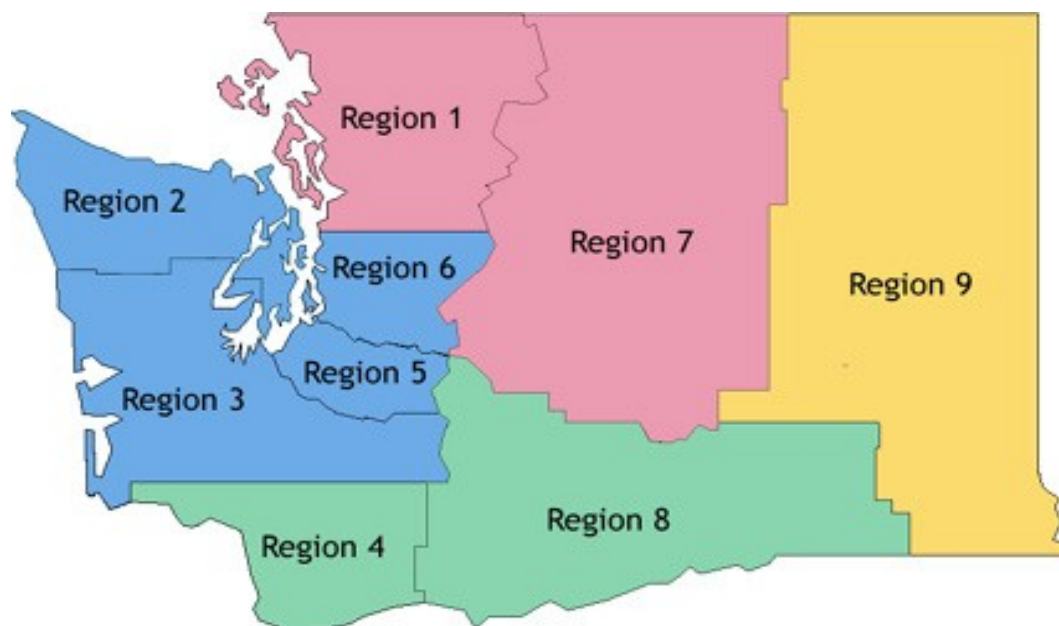Host: Snohomish County
Liaison: **Suzanne Pate**
              (425) 339-5249   spate@shd.snohomish.wa.gov

North Central Region: 7
Host: Chelan Douglas County
Liaison**:**   **Mary Small**   mary.small@cdhd.wa.gov
              (509) 886-6410

Department of Health-Tumwater Primary Emergency Operations Center Phone Numbers		
POSITION	**PHONE NUMBER**	**EMAIL**
EOC Director	**(360) 664-8530**	**DOHEOC01@DOH.WA.GOV**
Director Support	**(360) 664-8531**	**DOHEOC02@DOH.WA.GOV**
PBX Line	**(360) 236-4089**	
Fixed Satellite Phone	**(254) 204-3524**	
Admin/Finance Chief*	**(360) 586-3571**	**DOHEOC12@DOH.WA.GOV**
Admin/Finance Asst*	**(360) 586-2393**	**DOHEOC23@DOH.WA.GOV**
EOC FAX Line	**(360) 586-3016**	
*(*Admin/Finance can assist with scheduling call center volunteers)*		
Department of Health- PH LAB Shoreline		
POSITION	**PHONE NUMBER**	
Shoreline EOC Director	**(206) 418-5500**	
STATE Emergency Operations Center Phone Numbers		
POSITION	**PHONE NUMBER**	
State Duty Officer	**(800) 258-5990**	
EOC Switchboard	**(800) 854-5406**	
DOH Desk (ESF-8)	**(253) 912-4962**	
	(253) 912-4963	
	(253) 912-4965	

Web sites:

- **Citrix URL: https://fortress.wa.gov/doh/rap/**

- **Outlook Web Access: https://owa.wa.gov/exchange**

- **Secures: http://secures.doh.wa.gov**

- **WebEOC: https://fortress.wa.gov/mil/webeoc7/eoc7/**

• <u>DOH Web – Public Health Emergency Procedures</u>

In the event of a public health emergency:

- **The DOH <u>Internet</u>** will be used as a primary resource for disseminating information to the general public, the media, state and local agencies, and the public health system. The internet may also be used to provide emergency information to off-site DOH staff.

- **The DOH <u>Intranet</u>** will be used as a primary resource for disseminating information to DOH staff, if possible.

- **WASecures –** Designated Web Management Team member will assist in coordinating information posted on secure site, as necessary.

- **The Web Management Team** will coordinate with the Emergency Communications Office Manager (*Position 3* as outlined in *Emergency Communications Office Operations*) to initiate emergency Web procedures, and will maintain emergency status until otherwise notified.

Web Management Team

The Web Management Team consists of:
- *Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager (OS)**
- **Senior Web Designer and Usability Analyst (OS) – Team Lead**
- Senior Emergency Communications Specialist (OS)
- Emergency Communications Specialist (OS)
- Webmaster Back-up (DIRM)

* Note: The Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager is designated as the Emergency Communications Office Manager (*Position 3* as outlined in *Emergency Communications Office Operations*).

Emergency Web Procedures

For duration of a public health emergency, the Web Management Team:
- May be asked to work outside of normal business hours (volunteer basis).

- Will work under the direction of the Emergency Communications Office Manager.

- Team Leads (Senior Web Designer, Senior Webmaster or designees) will share authority for overseeing Web Management Team operations, including:
  o Prioritizing all emergency-related Web message development and posting.
  o Coordinating with WASecures team to ensure proper posting of secure/nonsecure Web content.

     o   Coordinating with DOH, local, and emergency authorities, as necessary.

     o   Following *Emergency Web Posting Approval Process* for all emergency-related Web content.

Immediate Response

In coordination with the Communications Office, the Web Management Team will immediately complete and post:

- **Emergency Web Message** – Posted to the DOH home page (see template).

- **Emergency Information Web page** - Linked from the DOH home page (see template).

  o   The *Emergency Information* Web page template is on the development server at:

  http://devwww/default_event_emergencyinfo.htm

Server Back-Up

- If the DOH server is down, limited emergency DOH information may be posted through DIS on AccessWashington (http://www.access.wa.gov/). We have filed our *Emergency Information* Web page template with DIS, and can complete via phone. To initiate emergency posting, designated Web Management Team member will contact DIS Communications Office:

  o   Joanne Todd, Communications Director, 360-902-3553

Approval Process

- Emergency Web postings must be approved by Emergency Communications Office Manager or designated Web Management Team member through the following procedures:

  o   Content approval for emergency messages must be obtained at Secretary of Health, State Health Officer or Assistant Secretary (or designee) level. If necessary, content may be conditionally approved for posting by Emergency Communications Office Manager until it can be reviewed by senior management.

DOH Web – Public Health Emergency Contacts

OS-Communications Office Staff*

Laura Blaske   **Home**: (360) 456-2170 / **Home Cell**: (206) 941-8074
(Public Awareness and Emergency   **Work Cell**: (360) 507-3648 / **Pager**: (360) 956-8307
Communications Manager)   **Home e-mail**: nodder2@hotmail.com

Bob Clark (Senior Web Designer and   **Home**: (360) 249-4934
Usability Analyst)   **Home e-mail**: rdclark147@gmail.com

Larry Champine   **Home**: (360) 943-2361
(Sr. Emergency Communications Specialist)   **Home Cell**: (360) 480-0327
                                                Home e-mail: larrychampine@yahoo.com

Greg Nordlund   **Home**: (360) 455-9725 / **Pager**: (360) 971-0964
(Emergency Communications Specialist)   **Home Cell**: (360) 349-2493
                                                 Home e-mail: gregnordland@gmail.com

*NOTE: In the event of a Web emergency—such as priority issue after hours Web posting—
please contact the Public Awareness and Emergency Communications Manager—or emergency
contact designee—to facilitate staff resources.

DIRM Staff – After hours assistance in Public Health Emergency **ONLY**

Yousef Fahoum   Home Cell: (360) 402-4366
(Webmaster)   Work Cell: (360) 507-4992
                                                Home e-mail: yfahoum@comcast.net

Marina Thompson   Home: (360) 456-3907
(Webmaster)   Home Cell: (360) 701-6370
                                                Home e-mail: marinat@q.com

Public Health Emergency Web Message

Depending on the scale of the emergency, the Web Team will use one of the following emergency Web information options:

OPTION 1:

To be completed and dropped in on the existing DOH home page:

Public Health Emergency

Due to the (event) in (location of event) on (date) at (time), the Department of Health is providing the following information:

- **General Public Call Center:** The Department of Health has established an emergency call center to handle general—non-media—inquiries: **1-888-703-4364.**

Ongoing updates will be regularly posted on this Web site.

(Add any details or instructions here.)

Related links
Examples of possible links:
- Office of Emergency Management
- Governor's home page

OPTION 2:

http://devwww/default_event_emergencyinfo.htm *to REPLACE existing DOH home page:*

Washington State Department of Health
Health
www.doh.wa.gov
a healthy dose of information

You are here: **DOH Home** » Emergency Information   **Search | Employees**

Site Directory:

- Newsroom
- About DOH
- Programs & Services
- DOH Web (A-Z)

- Alternative File Format Information

- Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

Access Washington®
Official State Government Website

- DOH Employee Information

Update:

Emergency Information

The Washington State Department of Health's Web site is temporarily unavailable. Access Washington is hosting this Department of Health Web page to provide emergency information.

Communications Office will provide a paragraph outlining type of emergency. This section will be updated as new information becomes available.

Related News Releases:

Links to any news releases related to emergency.

Important Contact Information:

- **Emergency** medical/fire/police assistance: 911

- **General information:**
  - **Public Health Emergency Information Line** — Washington State Department of Health
    - Toll Free: (888) 703-4364

  - **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Information Hotlines**
    - 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636) TTY: (888) 232-6348, 24 Hours/Every Day

- List of Local Health Departments in Washington

For more information:

Fact Sheets:

- Tularemia

Washington State Links

- Emergency Management Division
- Office of the Governor
- Washington State Patrol

NOTE: Other links as needed. For links outside the WA State system, include disclaimer. Possibly links include: Health Alert Network (CDC), FEMA, USAMRIID, and others currently listed on the PHEPR site.

ALL INFORMATION ON THIS PAGE SHOULD BE COORDINATED WITH COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE PRIOR TO POSTING

DOH Home | Access Washington | Privacy Notice | Disclaimer/Copyright Information

Washington State Department of Health
Office of Communications
101 Israel Rd SE, P.O. Box 47890
Olympia, Washington, 98504-7890

Last Update : 07/30/2009 02:28 PM
Send inquires about DOH and its programs to the Health Consumer Assistance Office
Comments or questions regarding this web site? Send mail to the Subsite Developer.

Emergency Communications Office Roster Activation

1. After assessing work needs, the Emergency Communications Office Manager will refer to the Emergency Communications Roster to identify which volunteers best match the type of work that needs to be done.

2. **Building access:** Administrative support staff will notify DOH Office of Risk and Emergency Management regarding building access for volunteers. Alert them that we are activating emergency Communications Office plan and will have additional staff coming into TC-1 at staggered times. (This is just a heads up; we will give them a complete list when available.) Call:
   - Duty officer pager: 360-971-0601

3. The Emergency Communications Office Manager will coordinate with the DOH EOC designate staff to contact needed volunteers—and division assistant secretaries—to schedule shifts.
   - Send **ROSTER/COMM OFC E-MAIL (in e-mail sample section)** to roster staff and assistant secretaries.
   - Call assistant secretaries first to alert; call roster staff.

4. **NOTE:** Volunteer contact information is located in top drawer of the lateral filing cabinet in Communications Office in Town Center 1, third floor, west wing, cube #3-W-009.

5. DOH volunteers can work in any available Communications Office cubicle or the additional nearby cubicles reserved for an emergency.

6. Volunteers and regular Communications staff need to sign in and out when working shifts during an exercise or emergency. This information needs to be submitted to the Admin/Finance Chief with the DOH EOC to track any reimbursement. The DOH EOC should be able to provide these sign-in sheets.

Standing Down: The Emergency Communications Office Manager will determine when the workload has sufficiently decreased for volunteers to return to their normal duties.

Background Information: Emergency Communications Roster Overview

In a major public health emergency, the Communications Office will be responsible for coordinating the agency's public information response efforts. To ensure adequate staffing for this effort, volunteers from the Emergency Communications Roster may be called.

Listing on the Emergency Communications Roster is voluntary and open to Department of Health (DOH) employees who have communications expertise. To help match skills to potential need, a representative from the Communications Office will meet with interested staff to go through the *Communications Skills Inventory Survey.*

DOH employees who have volunteered to work in the Communications Office may be asked to do a variety of tasks, depending on the severity of the emergency and availability/accessibility of Communications Office staff.

Please note: DOH staff who work in the Communications Office during an emergency will be compensated at their regular rate.

When would volunteers be called?

Volunteers from the Emergency Communications Roster might be called in the event of a public health emergency. Such an emergency would be declared by the Secretary of Health (or designee).

- Only one or two volunteers might be needed from the roster to ensure adequate staffing in the Communications Office (Town Center 1, Tumwater).

- If volunteers are urgently needed for emergency response in their own programs or divisions, they will not be expected to serve in the Communications Office.

- All volunteer participation must be approved by the division's Assistant Secretary prior to listing on the Emergency Communications Roster.

Once the Communications Office determines extra help is necessary, they will identify which tasks need to be done and which DOH volunteers fit those needs. Then, DOH volunteers and their assistant secretaries will be contacted to confirm the volunteer's availability.

Please note: The Communications Office may not ever need to mobilize volunteers from the Emergency Communications Roster. However, in the event of a severe public health emergency, the roster will help ensure adequate staffing during a crisis. Volunteers should agree to be listed on the roster only if they are willing to serve if called.

Logistics

- Mobilized volunteers from the Emergency Communications Roster will report to the Emergency Communications Office Manager for the duration of the emergency.

- The Communications Office is on the 3rd floor, West side, TC-1.

- Volunteers should not automatically report to the Communications Office in a public health emergency. The Communications Office will contact volunteers as needed.

- When the public health emergency becomes less critical and the workload lessens in the Communications Office, DOH volunteers will return to their normal duties.

Possible assignments (depending on employees' skills)

- Research (on the Web, person-to-person, etc.)

- Writing talking points, news releases, fact sheets, etc.

- Working with affected local health jurisdictions

- Coordinating phone calls between DOH spokespeople and the media

- Talking to the media

- Employee communications

- Other duties as needed

Emergency Communications Office HOTLINE Activation

Communications Office emergency hotline: 360-236-4040

Emergency Communications Office Manager (Position 3) responsibilities:

- **Activating** and **de-activating** the emergency phone system
- Determining which staff will take calls on the general emergency hotline (six phones available, as indicated on the DOH floor plan)
- Sending out e-mails to Executive Support Team and Senior Management Team on how to reach Emergency Communications Office Manager (see Sample E-Mail Section).

Administrative Support position responsibilities:

Activating the phone system

To activate the emergency phone system, only one person needs to log in to the system. To log in:

- Go to a phone in any one of the cubicles marked with an "Emergency Hotline" nameplate.
- Press **"ACD Login."** You should hear a dial tone.
- Enter the **phone's 4-digit phone extension number**. You should hear three confirmation beeps.
- The **ACD Aux-Work button should light up**. You are now logged in.
- **Press the ACD Auto-In** button to start answering emergency hotline phone calls. The Aux-Work light will turn off and the Auto-in button will light up.
- **To stop taking calls:** Press **ACD Aux-Work** button.
- **To begin taking calls again:** Press **ACD Auto-In** button.
- **To find out how many calls are in the queue:** Press **ACD Q-Calls** button at any time. (You don't have to be logged into the system to do this.)

Forwarding Communications' staff phones

The Administrative Support person needs to go to each of the cubicles marked "Emergency Hotline" to forward each phone to the general emergency hotline:

To forward phones: Press the "Call Forward" button and "4040."
(If the phone does not have a "call forward" button, lift the receiver and press "*2")

Distributing the emergency hotline number

After activating the phone system and forwarding Communications' staff phones, the emergency hotline number needs to be distributed via media alert blast fax to the media, LHJs and partners. (See Media Response Plan for details.) The phone number should also be posted on the Web. (See Web Procedures for emergency approval and posting instructions.)

De-activating the phone system

Stop forwarding Communications staff phones to general emergency hotline. From each phone, press the "Call Forward" button or press "#," "2." Then, log out each hunt group phone from the emergency phone system:

- Press the feature button labeled **"ACD Logout."** You should hear three confirmation beeps, indicating you are logged out. When you are logged out correctly, your **ACD Aux-Work** button and **ACD Auto-In** button should **not** be lit up.

- After the last phone is logged out, the phone system automatically returns to non-emergency status (with non-emergency greeting).

Incoming calls: Each time a call comes in, it will go to a different phone in the "hunt group" (Communications Office phones). It will ring on your regular extension. If someone calls the general emergency hotline and the call goes unanswered because all lines are busy (or because no one is taking calls from the hotline), the caller will automatically be put on hold (and hear an emergency message) until a line opens up.

The maximum number of calls that can wait in the queue is 12. Additional callers will receive a busy signal until the queue has space available.

PRIVATE emergency hotline: 360-236-4025

(Emergency Communications Office Manager)

For DOH emergency communications response __only__, e.g., Secretary of Health, Communications management, etc.

No activation required. The private emergency hotline (to reach the Emergency Communications Office Manager directly) is always ready to receive calls.

Only one greeting is recorded for both non-emergency and emergency status. The line will ring simultaneously on the Communication Director's desk and Administrative support's desk.

If the call is unanswered after three rings, the call will go to voice mail. If callers "zero out," they will be transferred to the general emergency hotline. The voice mail indicator button for this line is only on the phone in the Communication Director's office.

Emergency Communications Office Hotline Messages

Non-Emergency Status

Bulletin Board for 360-236-4040 (non-emergency message on general emergency hotline)

- **Greeting 1:** You've reached the emergency hotline for the Communications Office at the Washington State Department of Health. In a public health emergency, a Communications representative would be available to handle your call. Since we are currently not in emergency status, if you wish to speak with someone in the Communications Office, please call area code 360-236-4027 or at this time press "0." To repeat this message, please press "9." Thank you.

Emergency Status

System announcement for ext. 1975 (message callers hear when they enter the queue)

- Thank you for calling the Communications Office at the Washington State Department of Health. We are currently experiencing a high volume of calls and all of our lines our busy. Your call is important to us, so please stay on the line and your call will be answered in the order received. Thank you.

System announcement for ext. 1976 (message repeats when callers remain in the queue)

- Thank you for continuing to hold. Please stay on the line to speak with a representative from the Communications Office. Your call will be answered shortly. Thank you.

Private emergency direct line

Voice Mail for 360-236-4025 (private direct line for Emergency Communications Office Manager)

- **Greeting 1 (activated for both emergency and non-emergency status)**:
  Hello. You've reached the Emergency Communications Office Manager at the Washington State Department of Health. If this is **not** an emergency, please call the Communications Office at 360-236-4027. Otherwise, please leave your name and number, along with a brief message, and a Communications' manager will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.

General Public Emergency Call Center

Toll-free number: 1-888-703-4364

Overview
In the event of a public health emergency, intergovernmental drill or other high profile public health event that generates an extraordinary amount of public interest, the Secretary of Health will have the option to activate a staffed Emergency Call Center to handle general public calls. We anticipate the call center would be active for the period of highest public interest (3-5 days).

Logistics
- The call center will be staffed by DOH volunteers from all divisions.
- The call center consists of 20 phones located in the **Town Center 1 cafeteria** (Tumwater).
- Staff will work in 4 hour shifts (when possible) with a half hour briefing session prior to their shift and a 15-minute debriefing following their shift.
- **The Call Center will be activated from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. <u>unless</u> the scale of the public health emergency requires longer coverage.**
- Call Center volunteers, if represented, will be compensated in accordance with their respective collective bargaining agreement. Non-represented employees will be compensated in accordance with DOH policy.
- The call center will only be activated by the Secretary of Health or designee in a public health emergency.
- The number of volunteers called up will depend on phone volumes; all volunteers may not be called. Additionally, volunteers will not be expected to serve if they have other emergency duties, are ill or on annual leave, etc.
- The Communications Office will provide messages and information for call center volunteers.
- Volunteers will need to sign in and out when workings shifts. The DOH EOC can provide sign-in sheets.

Setting up the call center

All supporting documents can be found on the agency share drive at:

S:\OS\Communications\Emergency Communications\call center\Call center activation

Begin by reading "1 Read this First."
Supporting documents include:
- Call center layout
- Operator Roster
- Call tracking sheets
- Duty sheets for operators, supervisors and lead workers
- Equipment list and instructions

General Public Emergency Call Center (continued)

- Lead worker and operator email distribution lists
- Medication center fact sheet
- Sample call process
- Sample question and answer document

Notifications

To set up call center immediately notify the following:

One of the Telco supervisors, then follow up with email (DOH DL DIRM TRM Telco) if possible.

Bill Norris, Technical Resource Manager	David Lee, Operations Manager
360-236-4426 (office)	360-236-4435 (office)
253-312-0607 (mobile)	360-888-3017 (mobile)
360-236-2555 (mobile)	
bill.norris@doh.wa.gov (email)	david.lee@doh.wa.gov

Facilities – For help moving tables, etc.
Merdan Bazarov
360-239-8395 (mobile)
and
Suzette Frederick 360-236-3901 to let her know lunch room will be in use and to ask her to send an all-staff email announcing the lunch room will be closed to staff.

Emergency Operations Center (EOC)—EOC calls in volunteers by phone (Be sure they have most recent roster).

Volunteer notification—Using e-mail distribution lists for volunteers and lead workers, send a heads up that the call center will be opening and that they can expect to be called by EOC with their shift assignment.

EZRoute administrator—The EZRoute administrator is responsible for configuring the messaging system that is connected to the 800 line. They are responsible for coordinating with the communications office to determine appropriate messages, getting them recorded in both English and Spanish and adding them to the messaging system.

Information Line Only Option

The 800 number can be used to provide recorded information only as directed by the Secretary of Health. The option to ring through to a live operator can be added or removed by the EZRoute administrator as needed.

General Public Emergency Call Center (continued)

Call center messaging

Call center key points and scripts, as well as all recorded messages are developed and updated by the call center supervisor and the communications office.

Other languages

Over the phone translation service is provided by Language Line, Inc. Instructions for accessing Language Line, Inc. are provided on cards to each operator. The Spanish versions of recorded messages are provided by the Environmental Health Spanish Review Team headed by Elmer Diaz, 236-3357.

TTY service

TTY users are instructed to access the call center by calling 711, our state's TTY relay service.

General Public Emergency Call Center Duties

Call Center Volunteer Operators – Duties

- Take calls from the general public and answer basic questions regarding a public health emergency using information provided by call center supervisor. If necessary, refer callers to appropriate emergency services (i.e.,—refer media and local health officials to Communications Office emergency hotline at 360-236-4040).
- Review relevant call center materials before each shift.
- Report emerging issues to the call center supervisor.
- Provide data outlined on shift reporting forms (number of callers by county, caller type, emerging issues, most frequently asked questions).
- Maintain confidentiality as mandated by department regulations and HIPAA.
- Staff will work 4 hour shifts. Operators may arrange to work longer or shorter shifts with the call center supervisor. **Hours of operation: will be 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. unless the emergency requires evening hours.**

Call Center Supervisors – Duties

- Volunteer support: assist with caller issues and provide break relief to call center staff.
- Determine appropriate staffing level and hours of operation (with Communications Office).
- Work with Communications Office and DOH EOC to have volunteers scheduled for each shift.
- Work with the Communications Office and other key DOH staff to develop messages and information for call center volunteers. Make sure materials are current and coordinated with other messages communicated by DOH and its partners. Periodically, summarize call center activity for Communications Office, including any emerging issues.
- Make sure all operators have most current talking points and supporting materials at all times.
- Brief volunteers before each shift. Debrief volunteers after shift when possible.
- Collect and review operator reporting sheets at end of each shift.
- Ensure proper functioning of call center equipment with IT personnel and maintain call center supplies. Direct set-up of call center and storage of equipment when call center is not in operation.
- Record approved greetings for call center line. Activate greetings as required.
- Act as liaison with Communications Office, DOH EOC, and other partners.

Call Center Lead Workers – Specific Duties

- Assist supervisor as needed in performing duties including:
  - Provide support to volunteer staff, assist with caller issues and provide break relief to volunteers.
  - Help call in volunteers.
  - Collect/compile data sheets.
  - Conduct shift-briefings, as necessary.
  - Ensure volunteers have adequate supplies (including food and water).

Emergency E-Mail Samples

Staff #1 – Message to DOH staff
(Send to ALL STAFF with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line
Urgent: Protocol for media calls during public health emergency

Body
Refer all <u>media</u> calls related to [public health emergency] to the Communications Office.

If you receive a media call about the [public health emergency] that occurred on [date] at [time of event], please refer the reporter to the Communications Office emergency hotline, **360-236-4040.** We are tracking and coordinating these calls to help the media disseminate accurate and consistent information. Thanks for your help!

Staff #2 – Message to DOH staff
(Send to ALL STAFF with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line
Urgent: Agency Emergency Operations Center

Body
The agency's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) has been activated in response to the **[public health emergency]**. You may see people in an out of the EOC/Training Room 163 and extra activity around the buildings as people respond to the issue at hand.

The agency EOC staff may contact program staff directly in their response role. **Please treat any requests for information from the DOH EOC folks as a high priority**. If this creates any issues or questions with your workload, please work directly with your supervisor.

Emergency E-Mail Samples (continued)

Staff #3 – Message to DOH staff
(Send to ALL STAFF.)

Subject line

DOH EOC Stand down notification

Body

The agency's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) will be standing down its operation as of [time, date].

A special thank you to all staff who assisted in providing answers and information to the folks staffing the EOC.

LHJ #1 - Message to Local Health Jurisdictions
(Send through WSALPHO listserv with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line

Urgent: Communications assistance available from the Department of Health

Body

Due to the [public health emergency] that occurred on [date] at [time of event], the Communications Office at the Department of Health (DOH) has activated its emergency operations plan.

Additional staff members have been mobilized at the DOH Town Center 1 office in Tumwater to provide enhanced communications assistance to the public health system including:

- Centralized media and public information consultation and support
- Assistance with resource development (such as news releases or fact sheets)

To contact the DOH Communications Office, call their **emergency hotline**: **360-236-4040**.

Emergency E-Mail Samples (continued)

SMT/EST #1 - Private Emergency Hotline
(Send to Executive Support Team and Senior Management Team with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line

Urgent: How to Contact Emergency Communications Office Manager

Body

If you need to reach the Emergency Communications Office Manager (the person managing the Communications Office for the duration of this emergency), please call **360-236-4025**. This is a *private*, *unpublished* hotline. **Please do not distribute it outside the Department of Health.**

Please note that all Communications staff phones have been redirected to the general Communications Office emergency hotline for media/local health jurisdictions (360-236-4040).

The private emergency hotline **is the only way** to reach the Emergency Communications Office Manager directly. Thank you.

Roster/Comm Ofc – Communications Office Roster Activation
(Send to Emergency Communications Office roster staff and assistant secretaries with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line

Urgent: Emergency Communications Office Volunteer Roster Activated

Body

ALERT - As a result of (the event) in (location), the Department of Health will activate **emergency Communications Office operations** until further notice. We expect to be operational by (date and time).

PLEASE WAIT TO BE CONTACTED before reporting in to the Communications Office. We are now coordinating shifts and arranging for appropriate phone coverage. Your division's Assistant Secretary is also being notified of this request.

Thank you for your assistance!

Emergency E-Mail Samples (continued)

Roster/Call Center – General Public Call Center Roster Activation
(Send to General Public Call Center roster staff and assistant secretaries with high priority <u>exclamation point</u> on e-mail.)

Subject line

Urgent: Emergency General Public Call Center Volunteer Roster Activated

Body

ALERT - As a result of (the event) in (location), the Department of Health will activate the

General Public Emergency Call Center until further notice. We expect to be operational by

(date and time).

PLEASE WAIT TO BE CONTACTED before reporting in to the Call Center. We are now

coordinating shifts and arranging for appropriate phone coverage. Your division's Assistant

Secretary is also being notified of this request.

Thank you for your assistance!

Tips: Communicating with the Media and the Public in an Emergency

WHAT TO SAY

- **Identify three key messages.**
  - In stressful situations, people often have trouble processing and retaining information. To help ensure your main points are accurately reported, limit your key messages to no more than three, and repeat them often.

- **Don't use comparisons to make your point.**
  - Comparisons distract from the main message and usually backfire because they cloud essential issues with unrelated concepts (e.g., "most people have a higher risk of developing cancer than anthrax"). Stick to facts about your main topic.

- **Always tell the truth.**
  - Make sure your information is accurate and timely. If you don't know the answer, say so…and immediately find someone who does. Don't speculate.

- **Say more than "yes" and "no."**
  - Explain your answers, using short words and simple sentences. Be factual but avoid jargon, acronyms, and technical terms that may be misinterpreted by the reporter.

- **Avoid negative words.**
  - Unless absolutely necessary or part of an official communication from the Department of Health or related state agency, avoid words such as: no, not, can't, don't, never, nothing, none. Don't say "no comment."

- **Don't get personal.**
  - As a spokesperson to the media or the public, you represent the Department of Health, not your own personal opinion. Don't be tempted to give your personal opinion, even "off the record" to a reporter. If you're verbally attacked or accused, remember that it is not personal. Keep your cool.

HOW TO SAY IT

- **Be polite, respectful and patient.**
  - Reporters are not experts on every topic. Take the time necessary to clarify issues.

- **Build trust and credibility.**
  - Show the department's commitment to addressing the public's concerns; and take an open, honest approach to handling information.

- **Listen.**
  - It's as important to listen as it is to talk. Ask clarifying questions, if necessary.

- **Follow through.**
  - Find out reporters' deadlines and get back to them when you say you will, even if you have to get back to them only to say you're still working on getting the information they've requested.

I approve this emergency plan.

Tim Church
Communications Director
Washington State Dept. of Health
101 Israel Road S.E.
P.O. Box 47890
Olympia, WA 98504-7890